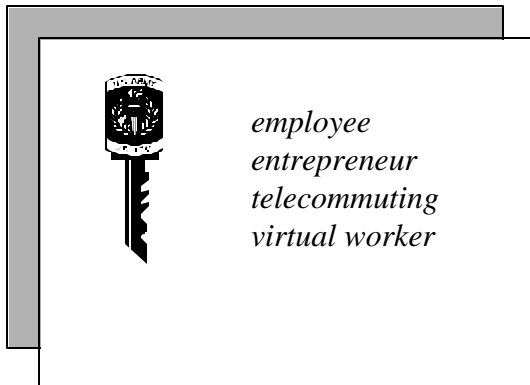


LESSON 3: CIVILIAN CAREER OPPORTUNITIES



INTRODUCTION

Selecting a career may be one of the most important decisions that you make. Since much of your adult life will be spent working, it is important to start as early as possible in selecting a career. This lesson shows you how to identify career choices that are right for you, determine your aptitude for them, and differentiate between a career and a job.

IDENTIFYING WHAT YOU WANT TO BECOME

Do you know at this time in your life what career or job you would like to pursue after graduating from high school? Your answer can be anything: doctor, plumber, hot dog salesman, **entrepreneur**, instructional designer, baseball star, electrician, and so on. The Department of Labor lists over 2,000 different jobs performed in the United States in its publication “The Dictionary of Occupational Titles.”

When thinking about your future, you should first consider all the jobs that interest you the most and why. Try to understand what draws you to those professions. Then,

identify the qualities and traits that you have for those jobs as compared to the requirements for them.

Maybe you do not have any idea what you would like to do. If that is the case, you might be eliminating some career choices because of negative thinking, such as:

- You assume certain jobs are not realistic.
- You do not have the resources to pursue certain jobs or careers.
- You may not have direct experience.
- You feel that you cannot even guess at jobs or careers that may interest you.

It is never too early to start planning for your future. Take the time to do so now.



DETERMINING WHAT YOU ARE BEST SUITED TO BECOME

Although you may believe that discovering your aptitudes for certain jobs or careers may seem like a difficult task, it can actually be easier than identifying the career that interest you. Your guidance counselor (career counselor, occupational specialist) has career tests that can match your skills, abilities, and interests with specific job titles. The results of these tests allow you to eliminate jobs that may not be suited for you (because you scored low on them) so that you can concentrate your time and research on those

jobs that better match your skills, abilities, and interests.

The **Armed Services Vocational Aptitude Battery (ASVAB)** test is a good indicator of how well you have developed your academic and occupational abilities. It measures aptitudes that are related to success in different types of civilian or military jobs.

There are several Websites that are dedicated to helping you assess your potential in the job market. Some offer a free assessment and some offer the assessment for a fee. The following Websites are just a few samples:

- www.assessment.com
Provides a free online career assessment test and appraisal through MAPP, also known as Motivational Appraisal of Personal Potential.
- www.personalnature.com
PersonalNature Career assessment service measures talents and work styles to provide a ranking of career suggestions for a fee.

CAREER VERSUS A JOB

Though they are often used interchangeably, the words “career” and “job” have different meanings. Jobs can be both the individual pieces of a career or random, isolated events in a person’s work history. Careers are formed over time; they consist of related jobs that build upon one another. One job does not make a career; several jobs do.

Working behind the counter at a fast food restaurant until you can do something else is a job. If, however, your goal is to become a manager and invest in franchises someday, it is the first step in a career. The knowledge and skills gained from working behind the counter are a foundation on which

you can continue to build as you move up in the fast food industry.

IDENTIFYING CAREERS FOR THE FUTURE

Not sure what kind of career to pursue? You might want to consider the computer or health fields. The number of jobs in these areas is projected to grow very quickly within the next few years. According to the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, the 10 occupations with the fastest projected employment growth for 1996 through 2006 are the following:

1. Database administrators, computer support specialists and all other computer scientists (118% more jobs by 2006)
2. Computer engineers (109%)
3. Systems analysts (103%)
4. Personal and home care aides (85%)
5. Physical and corrective therapy assistants and aides (79%)
6. Home health aides (76%)
7. Medical assistants (74%)
8. Desktop publishing specialists (74%)
9. Physical therapists (71%)
10. Occupational therapy assistants and aides (69%)

As you can see by the above list, the top three careers with projected growth are related to the IT, Information Technology field. One of the reasons for the interest in the IT field which involves working with computers, is that it provides the opportunity to work at home by the use of an electronic linkup with a central office, called **telecommuting**. There are thousands of organizations throughout the country that offer the benefit of telecommuting to their employees. Improved work performance and **employee** morale, reduced operating costs for items such as office space, and a more efficient work environment, all contribute to the

benefits of telecommuting. Employees who telecommute are sometimes called **virtual workers** because they are performing work tasks virtually, via the Internet, phone, and fax machine.



CONCLUSION

Many people never work at jobs or careers that use their full talents and abilities or that interest them. You do not have to work at a boring job. You can do something that interests you and still make good money.

By answering the two questions that career seekers must answer, you are on your way to a satisfying and personally meaningful career:

1. What do you want to do?
2. What are you suited to do?